

# National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board

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## DRAFT MINUTES Executive Committee Conference Call

Thursday, January 14, 2010, 12:00 (Noon) – 1:00 p.m. EST.

**Executive Committee Members Present:** Martin Massengale, Chair; Walt Armbruster, Vice Chair; Dennis Heldman; Edward Runge; Jean-Mari Peltier

**Executive Committee Members Absent:** Fred Cholick; Nancy Cox; Robin Douthitt

**NAREEE Board Staff:** Karen Hunter, Executive Director; Shirley Morgan Jordan  
Program Support Coordinator

**Others Present:** Carol Keiser—Long, Renewable Energy Committee Chair; Joe Reilly  
and Jay Johnson, NASS



### I. Roll Call of Members and Invitees

Karen Hunter, Executive Director called roll of the Executive Committee members.

### II. Comments and Welcome

Martin Massengale welcomed everyone on the conference call. He indicated that no December conference call had been held. He stated that Dr. Shah is leading the Haiti effort for U.S. Agency for International Development and had made several appearances on television and seemed quite competent and comfortable in his new position. He further stated that he sent a letter to Secretary Tom Vilsack inquiring about the advisory board nominations and October meeting details, but has not received an answer yet. He will follow-up. Karen noted that she had also tried on several occasions to contact the Office of General Counsel (OGC) but had not received a reply either. Dr. Massengale indicated that he would be contacting Dr. Beachy,

Director of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to set up a meeting to discuss a potential Council of Science Advisors. He stated that Dr. Beachy expressed interest in working with the Board on this topic. Some discussion followed around the labeling of “Chief Scientist” and Under Secretary for the Research Education and Economics (REE) Mission Area and the each plays within USDA.

Jean-Mari Peltier expressed some concerns about the changing of the title of the Specialty Crop Initiative in the Farm Bill. She stated that the title had been changed and reads differently. Another Board member suggested that it seemed as though some of the restructuring within the Department was following a previous proposal from the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Institutions (NASULGC, now the Association for Public and Land Grant Universities—APLU) rather than the Farm Bill. Dr. Massengale stated that he didn’t think any permanent restructuring was taking place that was not in accord with the 2008 Farm Bill.

Dr. Massengale emphasized that John Goldberg, staff member for the House Agriculture committee, who was involved in developing the legislation establishing the Board, considers the NAREEE Advisory Board to be the primary advisory committee on research, education, extension, and economics issues for the Department and stated that at the meeting.

He continued and noted that Dr. Molly Jahn had been officially named as the Acting Under Secretary. He stated that he believes Dr. Molly Jahn will be more involved in conducting business with the Board. He noted that he had expressed his concerns about the nomination and appointment of new members and stated that he would send a letter to the Secretary and cc Dr. Molly Jahn.

### **III. Comments from Molly Jahn, Acting Under Secretary REE (if available)**

Dr. Molly Jahn was unable to join the Executive Committee due to a previous obligation.

### **IV. Updates on Committee Activities and/or Reports**

#### **Specialty Crop Committee**

Walter Armbruster stated the he would send the Specialty Crop Committee report to the Board members and Executive Committee members. He noted that he would also send the final version to the Specialty Crop Committee members.

There was some discussion of the frustration within industry and academia concerning the Specialty Crop Research Initiative Program. Jean-Mari Peltier pointed out that some people may be interested in getting together to discuss their issues. The frustration is due to changes in the deadlines for submission of funding proposals to the program. The next deadline for proposals is January 15, 2010. Dr. Armbruster stated that he would submit an interim report and would like to also have a listening session to prepare for the next report. He suggested holding a listening session in Washington, DC and one other location within the U.S. Discussion ensued concerning

the length of time it has taken to write the report, and whether or not the time lapse affects the validity and usefulness of the report.

### **Renewable Energy**

Carol Keiser-Long updated the group on recent Renewable Energy Committee activities. She also stated that the delay in appointment of members to advisory boards is not limited to USDA. The Department of Energy has also faced extensive delays in appointing members to the Biomass Research and Development Initiative Technical Advisory Committee (BRDI TAC). The BRDI TAC is not expecting the appointment of any members until April or May. The next meeting was originally scheduled for February but has been delayed until April.

The Renewable Energy Committee had a conference call at the end of December after the latest BIRDI TAC meeting. The NAREEE Renewable Energy Committee is staying engaged in the details and activities of the BRDI TAC, as per Farm Bill mandates. Carol provided the BRDI TAC with a copy of last year's Renewable Energy Committee report to read. The Renewable Energy Committee is planning to further examine two recommendations from last year and detail additional challenges and gaps. The World Bank and Gates Foundation funded a Global Strategy Study and the committee will examine the study and how it might fit into their recommendations.

The Renewable Energy Committee would like USDA to look more closely at the priorities concerning feed stock production. The Renewable Energy Committee plans to have a face-to-face meeting during the same time as the BIRDI TAC meeting to coordinate and collaborate.

## **V. Update on Work Groups**

### **Protocol Committee Activities**

Nancy Cox is waiting for a meeting between Association of Public and Land-grant University (APLU) members and Dr. Beachy, hoping to obtain some guidance, before proceeding with work on the Protocol summary from the October meeting.

### **Extension**

The draft report which is circulating at the Work Group level is due back to Fred Cholic on Thursday. Also, Fred will be resigning from the Board to take on a new job as the Director/President of the Kansas State University Foundation. Fred stated that he would finish any projects that he has with the Board before leaving.

### **Nutrition and Health in Youth**

The draft report is being worked on within the Work Group. No deadline has been set for forwarding to the Executive Committee.

## **VI. FY 2010 Nominations Status**

Nominees have been vetted through the new additional processes this year. Dr. Jahn is expected to review the nominees in the very near future and forward the candidates to Secretary Vilsack for his review and formal appointment.

## **VII. Spring Meeting**

### **Potential Topics for Next Meeting:**

- 1.) Food Safety
- 2.) Food and Fuel Security
  - What are some of the funding priorities from USDA and other Federal Government Agencies
  - Any changes with Homeland Security
  - Coordination of research
- 3.) Food Security
  - How much supply or security in food
  - Inadequacy of Funds for food safety

There was some discussion revolved around making sure Jeff Steiner, the Senior Advisor for Renewable Energy and Howard Buffet were invited to the meeting to possibly give a presentation, as appropriate.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20p.m.

***The next Executive Committee Conference Call will be February 11, 2010 at 12:00 Noon Eastern Standard Time.***

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MARTIN MASSENGALE  
Chair

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Karen Hunter  
Executive Director

APPROVAL BY ADVISORY BOARD: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Initials  
Chair

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Initials  
Executive Director